Worksheet 2 Ethical, moral and cultural issues **Answers**

Task 1 Social Media

Use the Internet to find answers to the following questions:

1. What percentage of UK adults who are online use Facebook?

   More than seven in ten (73%) internet users have a social media profile, unchanged since 2014. More than nine in ten (95%) of those social media users say they use Facebook, with 43% saying they only use Facebook, and 84% saying their main profile is on Facebook. However, there has been a two percentage point decrease since 2014 in the incidence of social media users who have a Facebook profile, while the proportion of social media users who say they have a profile on YouTube, Instagram or Snapchat has increased year on year.

   Source: http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/binaries/research/media-literacy/adults-literacy-2016/2016-Adults-media-use-and-attitudes.pdf

2. What proportion of UK adults use online banking?

   It has been more than half since 2014. There are moves to require banks to make it possible for customers to use a single generic app.

   Sources: http://www.statista.com/statistics/286273/internet-banking-penetration-in-great-britain/

   http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-37014133

3. “Social networking sites improve the quality of people’s lives.” List some arguments for and against this statement. (Try a Google search on “social networking – good or bad?”)

   http://socialnetworking.procon.org/view.answers.php?questionID=001614

   Martin Baily, PhD, Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution, stated the following in a 15 February 2008 entry titled "Is MySpace Good for Society? A Freakonomics Quorum," from the "Freakonomics" blog hosted by the New York Times:

   “The pluses include easier contacts with friends, and increased chances to make new friends and create a community, as well as find romantic relationships. Even the advertising may be a plus, because it is targeted to the particular interests of the user.

   “The minuses are that all of this sharing can be dangerous, through gossip and potential abuse of the services. Examples include reported suicides linked to malicious gossip circulated on a social network. Some people become addicted

to life on the computer screen, and withdraw from personal contact — it's a long way from people sitting on the porch talking to friends and neighbours...”

4. List some instances where social media sites have been a great force for good in a crisis situation, and some instances in which they have brought devastating consequences to individuals or society.

   The procon.org site as mentioned before describes the effect of social media after the Haiti earthquake in 2010:

   http://socialnetworking.procon.org/view.source.php?sourceID=009454

   Ben Parr wrote in response to the question “Are Social Networking sites good for our society?”

   “After a magnitude 7.0 earthquake (and multiple aftershocks) devastated the nation of Haiti [on Jan. 12, 2010], social media became the medium in which everybody spread the word. Dramatic Haiti earthquake Twitter pictures swept across the web, while tech giants mobilized. The most impressive part of social media's impact on Haiti has to be the charity text message campaign that has already raised more than $10 million for Haiti victim relief. Social media spread the word, technology made it possible...”

   The following BBC web page describes one instance of the harm that a website can potentially do. A father describes how his son accessed suicide websites and eventually committed suicide.

   http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/health/5328550.stm

   "He had also been into chatrooms where people had been discussing suicide. I am not saying if he had not been on the internet he would not have done it.

   "We also found out he had been deeply depressed, but I believe the internet gave him the means to do it.”

Task 2 eGovernment

1. Research ways in which digital technology can involve citizens in political and economic decision-making

   Examples:

   Communication to and from decision-makers by email, Twitter etc.

   UK online petitions to Parliament. https://petition.parliament.uk/. E.g. support for hedgehogs in southern England: http://petitionmap.unboxedconsulting.com/?petition=121264

   The citizen budgeting scheme in Paris, called ‘Madame Mayor I have an idea’.

https://joinup.ec.europa.eu/community/opengov/news/citizen-participation-part-paris-smart-city-plan

Awareness of proposed decisions, e.g. Estonia's Electronic Coordination System for Draft Legislation, which allows the public to access every piece of draft law. https://e-estonia.com/component/e-law/

2. Consider the risks to effective decision-making posed by the ideas you found in part 1.

Special interest groups can push minority points of view while the silent majority stays silent

Decision makers can be distracted by less important issues (consider the hedgehog example above: important to some, but not perhaps all).

Short term and topical issues, and the news cycle, can overwhelm strategic thinking.

3. Why do you think that Estonia can organise a national system for electronic health records, while the UK has not?
actors might include:

A much smaller population: 1.3 million in 2016, a little more than Birmingham's 1.1 million.

An integrated system, which started from Estonia's independence from the Soviet Union in 1991 and which was driven by the Prime Minister (Mart Laar) personally.
https://e-estonia.com/component/digidoc/

The European Union allocated substantial structural aid – 3.4 billion Euros in the 5 years to 2013.

More at: http://accessh.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Estonian-eGovernance-Case-Study.compressed.pdf

4. You have secured a position as a virtual intern at XYZeVote Gmbh, a start-up from Wiesbaden, who are working on a secure online voting system for local and state elections for German, EU and eventually global markets. You have been tasked with bringing a fresh perspective to their project by writing a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis of online voting.

Strengths: easier for voters who are less mobile, fast and accurate to count.

Weaknesses: Open to fraudulent voting, may present legal or constitutional problems, could be costly to start up.

Opportunities: likelihood of greater participation, could save cost in the long term

Threats: system failure, e.g. directly through cyber-attack or indirectly through infrastructure failure, could be manipulated by governments, no confidence from voters, techno-confusion

More at: http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-32421086

http://eujournal.org/index.php/esj/article/viewFile/2939/2768

http://www.ejeg.com/search/index.html?name=keywords&value=e-voting

Task 3 Automated decision-making

1. Make a list of three areas where you feel that automated decision-making is an excellent idea, and three where it would be inappropriate.

Excellent: could include decisions which depend on quantifiable, reliable data. Such as: sorting potatoes by size, marking multiple choice tests, allocating priorities to pothole mending, and screening passports to identify people on watch or wanted lists.

Inappropriate: could include decisions based on subjective or fuzzy data, or where the consequences include immediate life risk. Such as: choosing a life partner, marking essays, diagnosing mental health issues, responding to a knife-wielding person shouting threats, or deciding how best to help a roadside casualty whose limb is trapped under a dripping fuel tanker.

2 Using your examples, try to identify a set of principles by which to determine when it is appropriate to automate decisions.

One approach is finding an ethical framework, such as:

Kant's Categorical Imperative: "Act as if the maxims of your action were to become through your will a universal law of nature"

Or a variant, the Golden Rule: "Treat others how you wish to be treated".

Utilitarians look for "The greatest happiness of the greatest number".

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ethics#Applied_ethics

See also https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-data-protection/principle-6-rights/automated-decision-taking/ and

https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/data-protection-reform/overview-of-the-gdpr/individuals-rights/rights-related-to-automated-decision-making-and-profiling/

3 Apply the principles you found in part 2 to these examples and discuss if the use of automated decision-making is appropriate.

(a) An insurance company requires you to install a tracking device in your car. Your premium is then based on data including when and how you drive, where you live, your age and the value of your car.

(b) The same insurance company requires you to take a medical test, which includes a DNA swab. Premiums for driving, household goods and life insurance are then all calculated on data including your DNA, and in particular any inherited medical conditions or indications of likely behaviour.

(c) Given your excellent predicted grade in A-level Computer Science, you have decided to apply for jobs in the defence sector, some of which involve a comprehensive security vetting process. This includes a third party HR agency examining details not only of your designated friends on social media, but their friends as well.

(d) You bought a surprisingly cheap smartphone. You clicked 'agree' to a long list of terms and conditions. One of them allows the smartphone retailer to monitor all text and internet communications and sell data about your contacts, purchases and location to direct marketing companies.

Each can be argued either way, although the individual perspective might see more of the disadvantages and the organisational perspective see more of the benefits. The assessment issue here is concerned with the quality of justification and consistency with the chosen ethical foundations or framework.

An alternative version of this task would be to organise a discussion or formal debate.